

For Immediate Release  
March 2, 2004

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# Senate Passes Restrictions On Canadian, Out-of-State Waste

## *Bi-Partisan Package Holds Out-of-State Waste to Higher Michigan Standards*

### **Sikkema: ‘These Restrictions Will Stand Up In Court’**

**LANSING** – The Michigan Senate today passed sweeping restrictions on the importation of Canadian and out-of-state waste, set a two-year moratorium on new landfills, and gave broader authority to the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality to enforce these tougher garbage standards.

“These new restrictions are designed directly to protect Michigan’s environment and its citizens, not discriminate against interstate commerce,” Majority Leader Ken Sikkema said. “These restrictions will stand up in court. It only makes sense that Canadian and out-of-state waste meets the same standards we require of our own.”

Sen. Patty Birkholz, chairwoman of the Senate Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Committee, said this legislative package represents a bi-partisan effort to limit the importation of Canadian and out-of-state waste. Canadian and out-of-state-waste accounts for approximately 25 percent of all trash entering Michigan’s landfills.

“Michigan needs stricter regulations and safeguards to protect our citizens from the waste dumped in our landfills each day from other states and Canada,” said Birkholz, R-Saugatuck Twp., one of the bill sponsors. “Non-Michigan trash isn’t always as environmentally safe as it should be. Sending this legislation to the governor shows our commitment to protecting Michigan.”

Sikkema, R-Wyoming, said the package provides a comprehensive revision of the state's solid-waste management laws to include additional protections against the disposal of inappropriate waste in Michigan's landfills. The legislation requires all Canadian and out-of-state waste to meet the same stringent standards Michigan has for its own waste. Landfills would be required to refuse any out-of-state waste that did not meet the tough standards.

The bills:

- Require the state Department of Environmental Quality to provide a statewide inspection program, which would mandate at least four inspections each year of each landfill to ensure compliance. Random inspections also could be conducted to help ensure compliance.
- Require landfills to refuse waste, regardless of its source, that did not meet Michigan's stringent waste standards, starting Oct. 1, 2004.
- Add two important new landfill bans – beverage containers and whole tires – to further reduce reliance on landfills and encourage recycling.
- Grant the DEQ director emergency power to prohibit any waste shipment that poses a threat to the public's health or safety or to the safety of the environment.
- Add new fines of up to \$25,000 per day for violating certain laws related to disposing of waste in landfills.
- Mandate a two-year moratorium on issuing certain new landfill permits.

“Michigan treats everyone else's garbage less stringently than our own and today this practice stops,” Sikkema said. “Applying our standards to every single piece of trash that comes into our state will allow us to protect our environment and keep our residents safe.”

Nine of the 11 bills now go to the governor for signing. Senate Bill 498 and House Bill 5235 have been sent back to the House for concurrence.

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**Comments from Sen. Sikkema on out-of-state waste are available for download on the Senate Majority Audiowire at [www.senate.michigan.gov/gop](http://www.senate.michigan.gov/gop) or by calling the radio hotline at 517-373-4000.**

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